

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2004

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman
Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2120 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Ranking Member
Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2120 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Hunter and Ranking Member Skelton:

We write today to express our strong support for TRICARE for Guardsmen and Reservists contained in Sections 706 and 707 of the Senate passed version of H.R. 4200. We appreciate the committee's long standing support for equity in Guard and Reserve health care benefits and believe that Sections 706 and 707 reflect our collective commitment to that coverage.

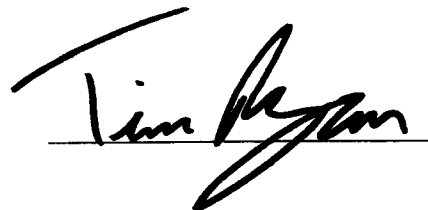
We know that you agree, as we make more demands on our reserve component, we must also make every effort to keep their benefits package commensurate with that service.

The federal government covers part time workers, who work a minimum of 16 hours per week, under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program. At a minimum we owe our Citizen Soldiers that level of commitment when it comes to health benefits for themselves and their families. As you know, even without activation, Guardsmen and Reservists train a minimum of 48 hours per month and an additional two weeks per year. With activation they, too, are separated from their families and their jobs, and represent a vital component of our front lines in the war on terror.

The Committee and this Congress made a significant step forward last year, expanding TRICARE coverage for Guardsmen both pre and post deployment. We should all be proud of that step. We should also work to ensure that the Department of Defense implements those programs and the one to cover uninsured reserve personnel in a timely manner.

Now, we have the opportunity to build on last year's accomplishment by passing Sections 706 and 707 as part of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4200 and ask you to make every effort to include this essential recruitment, readiness, and retention tool as part of the conference committee's final report.

Sincerely,



Dave Hobson

Paul H. Price

Leo Walden

Donald W. Payne

A. D. O'S

Gene Taylor

J. Grace

Mr. Finn

Bliss Smith

Charlie Stender

Ken Calcutt

Joe E. Senano

Ed M. Maly

Mike Belinakis

John Buzman

J. Cooper

C. D. B. O'Brien

Carl M. Hjalma

Virgil Goode

Shelley Moore Capito

Rick Warren

Arthur J. Fink

Tim Gill

Rahm Emanuel

K. Brown

Mark L. Under

John Davis

Paul T. H. H. H.

Pauline
Kathleen Downer

Kendrick B. Meek

Todd R. Pitts

Steve Isaac

John W. Dunn

Mahd H. Mahed

Rush Holt

Mike Rogers (AL)

Earl Pomeroy

Candice S. Miller

Main Boy

Jim McDermott

Tom Lehman

Jim Langston

Conner

June Camp

Joe Wilson

Jon C. Papp

Will Ferguson

Frank L. To Bunde

Chp Pch

Maynard

Mike Rose

Red Strickland

Jim Matteson

Frank Pallone Jr.

Chris McGowan

Bill Parnell Jr.

Pete de Fijn

Barnes Kunk

Bart Syrak

Arloyn B Mahoney

Bart Gordon

Chet Edwards

Robert E. Anderson

Tom